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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 1, 2018

A Message from the Moderator

"God doesn't want us to be shy with God's gifts, but bold and loving and sensible." (II Timothy 1:7, The Message)

This is the time of year when organizations talk a lot about commitment and stewardship for the next year. We at the Southeast Conference are no different. At our 2018 Annual Meeting in June we changed our fiscal year to run from October 1 through September 30. This change affords the Conference Board and staff the opportunity to provide more effective oversight of finances, ensuring better stewardship of the resources with which we are entrusted.



Often leaders in a spiritual capacities are too reticent to talk openly about commitment and stewardship because the tools to do so were learned in a command and control environment rather than one from a position of love, appreciation and trust. At Covenant Community Church (where I serve) I recently heard one of the best Stewardship appeals, ever! The person speaking said nothing about bills, salaries and expenses. Rather, she emphasized the great plans we have for 2019, the hope fulfilling those plans will offer to others and the ways our stewardship will make a difference in the lives of others in 2019. That day we received as many commitment cards as the previous two weeks combined.

Your SEC Board has great plans for 2019! For instance, two of the ideas coming from our recent Board Orientation Retreat are (1) we developed a plan for our board members to have on-going relationships with the

communities of faith within our Conference, and (2) we're working on strategies to promote *"connect-ability"* among congregations on the eastern side of the Conference.

Your help is needed. Therefore, we appeal to our Southeast Conference congregations to share in the stewardship of your resources to help make fiscal year 2019 a year of renewed hope for our Southeast Conference. Remember, ***"God doesn't want us to be shy with God's gifts but bold and loving and sensible"*** in ***"Transforming Churches and Transforming Lives."***

Rev. J R Finney II

Finding Hope for the Church

A message from one of our Consulting Conference Ministers

I recently asked a colleague, 'where do you find hope for the church these days?' Having asked it, I found myself pondering my own answer. You see, I witness plenty of brokenness in the church, plenty of dysfunction, plenty of despair over falling attendance and unmet budgets. I still have hope for the church! And I know you do, too. And that also gives me hope.



My primary source though, for the living of these days is not a finance workshop or a seminar on growing the church. It is not another deep dive into systems theory or a therapy session where I can release my pain into some ethereal space. All of these things are good; don't get me wrong. But we are the church, and our hope is born of a source more central to who's we claim to be. That's where the words of the old hymn come reverberating into my spirit once again:

*My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.*

Friends, with Jesus as our first hope, let's use all the other tools at our disposal to build the beloved community he envisioned when first he called upon twelve to follow him. For we do not grieve as do others who have no hope. **(1 Thessalonians 4:13)** Indeed, we rejoice in the new thing God is doing in our midst. Your consulting Conference Ministers are humbled to stand with you for a short time as we await the rebirth that God has promised and is working even now, in Jesus' name.

Be at peace, and be in touch, won't you.

John Vertigan
Conference Minister
South Central, UCC

Save the Date! Conversation with Colleagues

October 23, 2018 at 1:00 pm EDT at Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta GA

You are invited to join Southeast Conference and the Three Consulting Conference Ministers for a time of conversation and listening.

Facilitated by Rev. Don Longbottom, Rev. Ginny Brown Daniel, and Rev. John Vertigan, this will be an opportunity to share with your peers your questions, concerns, and feelings about the recent changes within the Conference. There will be space to share sorrow and joy, confusion and anger, fear and hope as we begin to move forward as a Conference.

Authorized Ministers and Church Leaders are welcome and encouraged to attend.

From the Generosity Coordinator

GENTLE REMINDER:

The books for the fiscal year 2018 closed on September 30, 2018 for your general contributions. The books for your OCWM giving, (Our Churches Wider Mission) will close December 31, 2018. We appreciate all the ways you continue to support this conference.

Special thanks to all of you who chose to make a personal donation to the relief efforts of Hurricane Florence. The widespread impact of these storms has prompted the UCC Disaster Ministries to establish a 2018 Hurricane Relief response that will allow us to expand our current capacities and respond thru our established network and partners in the threatened regions, states and territories.

YOUR OCWM DOLLARS AT WORK!!!

I'm grateful for the hospitality that you have extended to me as I continue to visit you and your churches.

Together, we will make a difference in this world.

Blessings, as we journey, **TOGETHER**,

Carrole Moss
Generosity Coordinator
SECUCC
860-655-6254
cmoss@secucc.org



Fall 2018 Conference Grant Applications Open

September 5 thru October 17, 2018 marks the next application cycle for Fall 2018 Conference grants. During this time congregations may apply in 3 different ways:

1. Online at secucc.org/giving/capital-campaign-grant-application/
2. Mailing a paper application to the Southeast Conference office
3. Emailing an electronic application to cmoss@secucc.org.



2019 Southeast Conference Annual Meeting Logo

Design Contest

We are getting excited in the Southeast Conference for our 2019 Annual Meeting. ARE YOU? Here is one way that you can help us get others excited to join us this year to make our Annual Meeting the biggest and best ever.

We need you to help us coming up with a unique design/logo centered around this year's theme:

"That We May All Be One" (1 Corinthians 12:12)

The deadline to submit your entry is November 9, 2018 at midnight. All submissions must be in JPEG format. Please send your entry to Rev James Bowman Harris at james@cookevilleucc.org.

Judging by the Annual Meeting Planning Committee will take place on Monday, November 12 in a "blind" contest. There will be one overall logo design winner; all other entries will be used to create interest in our workshops, with honorable mentions for each submitter.



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2018. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers. [Click here to download the entire 2018 prayer list.](#)

Week of October 1

- Liberty Congregational Christian UCC; Brantley, Alabama
- Retired Servants Event; Blowing Rock Conference Center
- Leslie Carmack
- Bob Hurst
- Cindy Barto

Week of October 8

- Holy Trinity Community Church; Nashville, Tennessee
- Martha Sue Carter
- Joseph Ingle
- Kenneth Samuel
- Clarice Mitchell

Churches in Transition: United Church of Huntsville, Huntsville AL; Garden of Grace, Columbia SC; Emmanuel, Greenville SC; First Congregational, Birmingham AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta GA; First Congregational Christian, Montgomery AL; First Congregational, Savannah GA

News from the Wider Church

Back Bay Mission Welcomes John Dorhauer

The General Minister and President of the UCC, John Dorhauer, visited Back Bay Mission in Biloxi MS for a few days late in September where he engaged staff in conversation about their passions for service, observed programs in place, and met guests and clients. Coinciding with that visit was the Back Bay Mission Board of Directors meeting, led by president Matt Williams. At the board meeting Dr. Dorhauer overviewed some challenges of the times and then asked the board to reflect, discuss and share what is working at BBM, what is not working, what is working but making no difference and what do we need to look like in 10 years. During meal times, staff and board members provided fellowship opportunities, gulf coast hospitality and tasty shared meals.



The photos were taken the evening before meetings began. It is at Shaggy's (a Biloxi restaurant that supports Back Bay Mission) and those present were UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer, Board members Crystal Allen (OH), Mary Ruth (TN), Matt Crebbin (CT), Staff members Carol Merriman (WI), Paul Longstreth (TX), and Volunteer Kelly Divine (OH).

News from Our Local Congregations

Pride All Year Long!

Circular Congregational Church participated in Charleston Pride on September 22, while Pilgrim Congregational Church will celebrate Chattanooga Pride this Sunday, October 7 and a number of Atlanta churches will be involved in Atlanta Pride on October 14.



Victory 2018 Health Walk and Homecoming

Join the folks of Victory for the World congregation this weekend for a time filled with fun, food and fellowship. [Learn more.](#)

Victory Homecoming & Health Walk Weekend 2018

Focus on Health

Saturday, October 6
8:00 AM-2:00 PM



Homecoming!

Sunday, October 7
8:45 AM-3:00 PM



Training and Learning Opportunities



Healthy Boundary Training: it's Mandatory!

As most of us are aware, Healthy Boundary Training is now **MANDATORY** in the United Church of Christ.

This training has been offered several times this year in an attempt to ensure that **ALL** clergy is trained by December 2019. The next/final training session to be offered this year (2018) will take place on **October 6th, 2018** in Birmingham, Alabama.

All training sessions are scheduled for 9am-4pm. It is important that you arrive on time and are present for the **ENTIRE** session in order to receive your "Certificate of Completion."

Each session is \$60.00 and may be paid thru our online registration. This fee includes lunch, snacks and all workbooks and materials for the session. If you are unable to register online, please contact me or Heather Fosburg so that we may assist you with this process. **THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4.**

We look forward to seeing you in Birmingham. Should you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Blessings,
Min. Carrole Moss
Healthy Boundary Trainer

Online Worship Music Planning Workshop Offered

Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell are offering a ground-breaking live stream workshop that brings clergy and musicians together in a learning environment that will enrich collaborations with exciting creative processes and skills.

Where the clergy/musician relationship is healthy and collaborative, the worship life of the congregation flourishes. When it isn't, both parties are often miserable in their ministries. It doesn't all have to be the "luck of the draw." We can learn ways of honing practical skills and building a common vocabulary that can inspire and transform our collaborations, relationships, and our worship design and leadership. And our congregations will benefit. Join us and let's move the conversations deeper for the sake of healthy and vibrant communities!

October 11-12 - 8am - Noon Pacific / 11am - 3pm Eastern each day
(total of six 45-minute sessions with offline reflection between)

Recordings will be available to all who register so your schedule doesn't prevent you from missing a thing! This workshop is free to all full-year Worship Design Studio members. CEU's available. [Learn more here.](#)

Healthy Congregations Workshop in Atlanta

Healthy Congregations, an interdenominational workshop for clergy and lay leaders, will be held Friday evening and Saturday, November 16-17, 2018 at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. The goal of this outstanding training event is to help church leaders deal effectively with the chronic anxiety and conflict that plague many congregations today. Participants learn how to put limits on destructive behavior, prevent anxiety from infecting the whole church, and facilitate healthy change. Sign up no later than November 2, 2018 to take advantage of their early-bird or congregational group discounts. Learn how you can function as your congregation's "immune system!"

For more information about the mission and programs of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, please visit their [website](#). For a detailed brochure and/or congregational group discount coupon, click on the [Brochures & Coupons](#) tab at www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

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